



NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- The Nation's state and local public health systems are not adequately prepared for rapidly evolving health threats.
- Independent studies have found that only one-third of the U.S. population is effectively served by public health agencies.
- National standards for state- and local-level public health systems' performance are needed to assure that all Americans are protected and served by effective public health services.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

The mission of the National Public Health Performance Standards Program is to assure the performance of essential public health services through performance measurement, improvement planning, and systems development. The program, started in 1998, is a CDC partnership with various public health agencies. The partners have established model, national public health performance standards and are facilitating their use by state and local public health systems and local public health governing bodies. Instruments to assess state, local, and governance capacity to meet performance standards have been tested in 8 states and 380 local jurisdictions. In addition, CDC and the U.S. Department of Justice have assessed the capacity of local public health systems nationally to respond to bioterrorism and other community health emergencies.

Example of program in action: Model performance standards for essential public health services already have influenced changes in test states. In Florida, performance assessment has been incorporated into the state's management and quality improvement program. In Mississippi, performance standards have been used in the legislature's review of public health agency responsibilities, and the Texas legislature has adopted the essential public health services as the basis for public health activity. New Jersey is in the process of adopting revised local public health performance standards that are grounded by the national standards.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

After extensive developmental work, the National Public Health Performance assessment instruments are being released for general use nationally. Technical assistance services are being strengthened to support use of the instruments. Use of these instruments will assist state and local public health agencies and systems partners to improve capability needed to deliver essential public health services. Special emphasis will be given to supporting implementation of the Public Health Threats and Emergencies Act of 2000 through bench-marked measurement against the national performance standards. The Public Health Threats and Emergencies Act is a major federal initiative to strengthen the Nation's public health preparedness and infrastructure.

For information about this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/programs.

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